

# THE AMERICAN NATIONAL PREACHER.

No. 12, Vol. XXIII.

DECEMBER, 1849.

Whole No. 276.

## SERMON DXII.

BY REV. JESSE T. PECK, D.D.

President of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa.

### THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST.

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."—ISAIAH 42: 4.

THE holy evangelist applies this prophecy to Jesus of Nazareth. It is a revelation of his untiring perseverance in his mediatorial work. Perseverance is a high virtue. We admire it even apart from its object. In a good cause it indicates a deep conviction of its importance, sincerity in principle, and fidelity in purpose. There are many noble examples of this virtue among men, but the most illustrious in history is the Son of God. Let us consider

THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS CONDITIONS, ITS ACTION, AND ITS TRIUMPHS.

#### I. THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS CONDITIONS.

1. *His unfailing merit.*—The necessity of merit in the world's Redeemer had its origin in the relation of man to law, and to salvation. The claims of law were imperative and unchanging on all that man possessed. Law, therefore, as the expression of immutable truth, must require the unreserved appropriation of his powers to the service of his Maker; and, as disobedience could have no tendency to diminish the extent of his obligations, its claims must have been as absolute in all respects after, as before the fall. Besides, as a single act of rebellion must imply contempt of Jehovah's authority and defiance of his justice, man must have been obnoxious to all the penalties of the law. And as no act of obedience can have any effect to counteract an instance of disobedience, and as the necessary result of rebellion was the depravation of the whole man, his condition as a sinner was legally hopeless. Finally, as the claims of law must be at each subsequent moment precisely what they would have been, if man had retained his original perfection, and as his disabilities must remain what they were in the fall, an infinite accumulation of guilt was legally certain. The relation of man to law was therefore that of a sinner under sentence of death, with no possibility of self-redemption.

In his relation to salvation, as guilty, he was a candidate for pardon; as morally dead, he was a candidate for regeneration; as

impure, he was a candidate for sanctification ; and as immortal, he was a candidate for heaven.

Now, the infinite difference between what man was as a sinner, and what he would be as saved, must constitute the ground and measure of the merit needed, to render the offer of salvation possible. Without this merit, pardon would assault the law in its spirit ; regeneration, in its penalties ; sanctification, in its effects.

The fact of infinite merit in the Redeemer is rendered certain by the fact of salvation ; for the law having infinite claims, no one of which ever has been, or can be met by the sinner, and he being saved in the face of the law, either his claims have been compromised, or the merit of the substitute has been equal to his demerit ; and as the former is impossible, the latter is certain. It is also confirmed by the character of the Redeemer. He was God-man. And we rest the extent of his merits not upon the amount of his sufferings, but upon the dignity of the sufferer. As we should suppose, *a priori*, that nothing less than an infinite nature could offer a sacrifice of infinite merit, so the Father has demonstrated in the gift of Emmanuel for the offering. Let then the problem be put in its severest form—the law unyielding, how to save the sinner ?—And the answer is, “ We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor ; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” “ The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

The philosophy of merit is deep as the bosom of God, and, of course, to us fathomless. But this, to the student of nature, tends strongly to confirm the fact ; for he finds inexplicable phenomena everywhere, and the suffering of one in behalf of another is so common as to excite neither surprise nor attention. Besides, if the Christian scheme were comprehensible by us in all its principles and facts, it would be human, and hence valueless. That the sufferings and acts of Jesus should be a substitute for legal demands upon sinners, addresses not our reason but our faith—faith divinely produced in the soul, greatly strengthened by the analogy of nature, positively commanded by the evidence of revelation, and fully vindicated by experience. The clear development of this profound philosophy is in Scripture and in history. Its last expression is the will of God. “ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The history of merit is the history of Jesus. The surrender of life was a central crisis in that history. But it is not to this alone that we are to look for merit in behalf of the race. We have only to reflect that no single remedial act of the adorable Redeemer could be in any way necessary to himself ; that every such act was so much more than was due from him, to be impressed with the truth that they are all meritorious, and parts of

the one great offering in behalf of the world. The work of salvation in progress for more than four thousand years, before the crucifixion, argues the efficacy of mediatorial acts, and strongly indicates their existence. Now the frequent appearance of a Divine Person remedially engaged in the history of the pre-advent church, comes in to confirm this conviction. Grant that all these acts would have availed nothing without the death-scene. It is also true that these were indispensable conditions of that scene—that the existence of one meritorious act involves the principles and certainty of all essential ones—that from the earliest date of determined redemption, this world has been given up to the Messiah for the sole purpose of an effort to save it—and its history has hence been the product of this effort in action with depraved humanity. Merit—not of a single act merely—but of the Son of God—of the Saviour as the whole, in character, and action, begins therefore with man's probation, and must extend to its close.

The effect of this view of the necessity of merit—of the fact of merit—the philosophy of merit—and the history of merit, is to show that the resources of the Saviour in this respect are like his nature infinite, and hence unfailing; and this is the first great condition of his unexampled perseverance.

2. *His unlimited power.*—Our idea of power is an inference from the fact of power. Limited acts indicate the agency of limited power. Those acts which to us are illimitable suggest the idea of infinite power. Hence Divine Revelation, to teach us the infinite power of Christ, ascribes to him the work of creation in its absolute, universal, and special sense; and informs us that he will fold up this vast universe as a vesture and lay it aside. These are acts which, by the laws of our being, suggest and prove the infinite power of Christ. When, after this, we learn from authority that he is invested with the awful attribute of omnipotence, we believe it. But this is physical power. A higher necessity exists. Spiritual changes are required to prepare man for endless happiness, which demand a moral power as infinite as that physical power which made the world. What less than this can rouse a sinner from his slumber of death—crush the rebellion of his heart—roll away the burden of his guilt—cleanse his soul from its deep-struck pollutions—and bring him to a permanent residence in heaven? What less than this can break down the barriers which sin has raised to the progress of truth, and hold up the throne of infinite justice, while the work of saving sinners goes on? And here also our evidence both of authority and of fact is perfectly decisive. “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Not the physical power by which he made the worlds, certainly. This he always had. But the power in heaven to arrest the avenger of blood—to hold the thunders of Divine wrath in abeyance, and to send out the waves of truth, and love, and glory, to deluge the earth. The “power on earth to forgive sins” and “to cleanse from all unrighteousness.” This

interpretation is sustained by innumerable facts. Sinners are awakened, regenerated, sanctified, saved. The justice of God is maintained, and his throne is secure while the work of redemption is in progress. Thus the question of power is settled. It is infinite as the nature of God. No possible demand can exhaust or diminish it. The fiercest assault of fallen men—the wildest onset of millions of demons cannot *drive* him from the mediatorial throne. From it he directs the affairs of the remedial dispensation amid the tumults and mad strife of the race infuriated by Satan, with the calmness and dignity and ease of Omnipotence. His resources of power are unfailing, and this is the second condition of his perseverance, till the world shall be lit up with the flames of the judgment.

3. *His infinite wisdom.*—The direction of almighty power in the work of salvation must be the highest possible effort of wisdom. Difficulties more formidable than we can appreciate must crowd every moment of the mediatorial reign. They baffle the skill of the wisest of men, as often as they engage them. Not indeed in the choice of remedies. One sole relief for the woes of the world is mentioned by the omniscient God. But the disease is so malignant and mysterious that no man can know it. The remedy is too profound for the penetration of finite powers. The place, the time, and the mode of its application, are all infinitely beyond our reach. Omniscience alone is adequate security against fatal mistakes, in such a work as an attempt to save a soul. It is a fearful thing to be limited in intelligence even when we treat the diseases of the body. The peril of life is too often the sad necessity, imposed by defective skill. But how much more fearful would be the result of an error in this great Physician. The undying soul is the seat of the disease. The death it threatens is damnation in hell. No wisdom but the unerring is equal to the cure. The most intelligent of men stand aghast before an agonizing sinner sinking to perdition. But the Son of God knows instantly what to do. He who could penetrate the dark bosom of deceit and declare its hypocrisy while it rejoiced in its fancied concealment—he who “needed not that any should testify to him of man, for he knew what was in man”—he can never be at loss to know the power of his own blood—the instant in which its application becomes practicable in the sovereignty of right, and saving in the sphere of the doomed.

The same Omniscient sight penetrates the utmost extreme of this world's darkness, sees at a glance its part, and its whole of corruption, and suffering—its demerit and exposures. He who is omnipresent in history—the history not only of time but eternity, not only of man but of God, sees the work to be done and the way to do it, which the renovation of the race, the establishment of “judgment in the continents of earth,” and “the isles of the sea” require. If then to unfailing merit and unlimited power, we add the Saviour's infinite wisdom to direct in the application of both, we have the third great condition upon which this perseverance depends.

4. *His exhaustless love.*—Only one question remains. Has he love to move him to the use of his merit, his power, and his wisdom? The demands upon his love are seen in the fact that his efforts are required for the good of the race alone. No necessity for one of them exists in the nature or wants of the Son of God. For man he must have had a love so deep, so infinite as to move him to all his mediatorial acts. And he must toil not merely for the needy and the wretched, but for the corrupt, the guilty, “the rebellious.” His vast preparations extending through thousands of years were expressly for a mission to a world in arms against the Father, Son and Holy Ghost! A mission not to destroy, but to save! What depths of holy love must have dwelt in his infinite mind to have moved him to this! It was sufficient. It brought him from the realms of light. It beamed from his countenance. It breathed in his language. It was the ruling element of his acts. It mingled in his miracles, in his private interviews with his chosen ones, and in his stern rebukes to the hypocrites, by whom he was surrounded. It carried him to the cross. It gushed from his heart in the very agonies of death. It bore him to the intercessor’s throne. It has sustained him there to this hour. And it is impossible for us to conceive of a necessity greater than that which has demanded his love, since the morning of redemption dawned upon the race, of a principle of love in *possible*, not already in *actual* requisition. Our faith in the infinity of Jesus’ love wants not a single quality of indubitable evidence. Whatever therefore his unfailing merit would justify; whatever his unlimited power can accomplish, and his infinite wisdom vindicate, his exhaustless love moves him to do. And this is enough. Other causes there doubtless are—causes that lie deep in the infinite intelligence—but these are satisfactory to us. In merit, and power, and wisdom, and love, “he shall not fail.” He will therefore not be “discouraged.”

## II. THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS ACTION.

1. *It is righteous in its character.*—He has been engaged in no selfish work—no attempt to overreach or destroy his enemies. Not a single act of resentment can be traced in all his history. But he saw that the laws of God had been set aside in this earth, trampled upon by the very beings for whose protection they were designed. That man had risen up against his fellow-man, that war and blood had followed in the train of angry passion, proud selfishness, and ungodly ambition. That “justice had gone away backward,” retreating in anger from a world in which she had been insulted and defied. “To set judgment in the earth,” and give his righteous law to the isles of the sea, was therefore his great and glorious work. The darkness which hung like the night of Egypt over the earth was to be dispersed—man’s attention to be engaged to a Divine voice, speaking to his inner nature—his thoughtfulness of God, spirit, law, duty, death, heaven, and hell to be raised to a habit—godly sorrow for sin to be wrought in his heart—faith to supersede infidelity. Sin in all its guilt to be

pardoned—the soul, dead to God and truth, to be brought to life—polluted, to be cleansed from sin. This for the individual.

For society, the purity and power of a Christian civilization were to be extended to the remotest parts of the earth. A higher, holier life was to be poured through the social system. War, aggression, and injustice of every form to be superseded by goodwill to men. The universal brotherhood of humanity to become a recognized reality. Jehovah enthroned in the hearts of men to become the acknowledged Sovereign of the race, and “the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

This is the work in which the Son of God is engaged. Verily it is righteous in its character, compared either with the laws of eternal rectitude, or the commonly received opinions of men. Righteous in view of the wants and woes, the bliss and the destiny of the race. Righteous?—Nay, it is benevolent; it is gracious in every principle it involves, in every impulse it gives to human thought and feeling; it is glorious in every issue revealed to sense, or consciousness, or faith.

2. *It is various in its expedients.*—The Divine Redeemer has confined himself to no single mode of carrying out his gracious purposes. His anxiety to succeed, and our vast debt of gratitude are indicated by the almost infinite variety of the means he has adopted.

Look, for instance, at the general system of rewards and punishments—the invariable connection established between virtue and happiness, vice and misery—the manifestations of himself as the remedial governor of this revolted province of Jehovah's empire. He swept an entire race of sinners from the earth; He elected the family of Abraham to be the witnesses of his power and medium of communication with the whole world. He delivered his law amid the thunders of Sinai; He moved before Israel in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire; He scourged the rebels of Palestine by war, and pestilence, and death; terrible vengeance fell upon Sodom and Egypt, Idumea and Babylon; the tabernacle, the temple, and the cross revealed the Divine authority of law, the exalted dignity of worship, and the ineffable glories of redemption. The self-consciousness, the language and the acts of the righteous attest the power of pardon, the wonders of a spiritual resurrection, and the moral splendors of a holy life. Faith disarms the tyrant death—snatches from the grave its victim, and lights up eternity with the smiles of the Godhead. But proud, rebellious sinners, in war with Jehovah, by guilty millions, “bite the dust,” doomed and damned forever. Thus does the adorable Redeemer seek to guard the laws upon which the harmony of the universe depends, and retrieve the affairs of earth.

Look also at miracles and prophecies.—To emancipate Israel from the thralldom of Egypt, he turned her river into blood, and slew her first-born. He led his people triumphantly through the divided waters, and overwhelmed their raging enemies. In



the might of his providence he poured the torrent from the smitten rock, sent bread from heaven, and brought quails upon the camp of Israel. He divided Jordan by his power, and established his colony upon the soil of his foes. He selected a few from the ranks of his people, and fixing their gaze toward the coming future, he drew aside the veil which concealed the latter days. They saw with prophet's ken a sufferer hang upon a cross. They saw the blood that gushed from his wounds. They saw the light that beamed from his soul, flashing through the earth and the heavens. Before the power that went out from the dying Christ they saw types and shadows fleeing away—pagan temples crumbling to dust—souls by millions leaping from the chains of superstition into the glorious liberty of the sons of God—dynasties and kingdoms falling, rising, forming and partaking of a new, a strange, a potent life. They saw, and wrote, and shouted, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." And he came as was predicted. This sinful world saw its Creator veiled in humanity; saw him "without sin," the model of perfection; saw him assert by his miracles his sovereignty over nature's laws; heard the gracious words that fell from his lips; saw him die amid the convulsions of nature, and rise in triumph from the tomb. A risen Christ walked abroad in the midst of his foes, and mingled with his disciples, breathing kindness and consolation to their hearts. Sinners upon earth verily saw their Lord and Saviour ascending to heaven! What a demonstration of the reality of souls, and of resurrection-bodies—of the spirit-world, and our relation to it! What displays of goodness had passed before the eyes of men! What redeeming merit had been concentrated in his death! What triumph in the fulfillment of prophecy, and the demonstration of the whole Christian scheme! What wonder that the truth established amid such displays of love and power proves too mighty for the "gates of hell?" Thus was this great expedient, upon which all others depended, tried in the sight of angels and men.

But others were to follow. "I will send the Comforter" was his gracious promise to his desponding disciples—"I will send the Comforter"—the glorious announcement to a world in anguish! And the Comforter came, but no mortal could tell the extent of the gift. He was light to the benighted—reproof to the obdurate—consolation to the sorrowing—sanctification to the impure! In short, a constant message from eternity, calling spirits away from this stranger-land to a congenial home in heaven—the might of God rescuing souls from the grasp of the Devil—a guide to immortality so bright with the effulgence of Divinity as to light up the path of the pilgrim through time and the grave to the land of the blessed.

And when Christ had gone, it was found that he had left behind him the elements of a holy fellowship, a spiritual brotherhood, a living church; that these, by their own celestial affinities, approached each other—combined and formed an imperishable

unity, the outward manifestation of which was the kingdom of God on earth, visible to men. Thenceforward, as before, it should be impossible to say there is no God in history. His very habitation should be palpable to the senses, and his reign upon earth a living, distinguishable, powerful fact, to deny which, would be to assail all faith in verities, and resolve universal being into phantasms; and thus the church has stood, varying in her external forms, but indestructible in her essential being—a veritable theocracy in the midst of anarchy, despotism, and misrule—"the light of the world"—"a city set upon a hill."

This Divine institution included many of the gracious expedients relied upon by the Saviour, for the redemption of man. Her sacraments were not only signs and seals of the spiritual covenant between Christ and her members—they were monuments of her organization, her principles, and her heroism. To this day they attract the gaze of a sinking world, as a light upon the shore does that of the tempest-tossed mariner. They defy the shafts of infidelity, and bless the world by their support and diffusion of Divine truth.

Her Bible had been early commenced. "Holy men of old wrote and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Son of God took his place in the revelation. The apostles recorded their message, and the sacred canon closed. Like the death of Christ in relation to his atoning acts, this Holy Book is central in relation to the means of moral illumination; it is pure light directly from Heaven; it is God teaching by language! declaring the attributes of his nature—the rights of his sovereignty—the rebellion of man, and the way of salvation! Appealing by law to his sense of duty—by threatenings, to his fears—and by promises, to his hopes; addressing his reason by the loftiness of its truths, the force of its diction, the grasp of its literature, and the sublimity of its science—to his sensibilities, by the benevolence of its proposals, the energy of its pathos, and the power of its love. With these mastering qualities it is sent through the church into all the world, a Divine expedient for the salvation of the race.

Her ministry is appointed by Jehovah himself. They are men of like passions with ourselves, sent out to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. From the lips of our *brethren*, whose integrity we know, we hear intelligence from the spiritual world—from the throne of grace—from God, the Holy Trinity. From hearts imbued with a Saviour's love they proclaim mercy for sinners. By Divine authority they summon us to a holy life; they teach us how to glorify God; they offer us peace and triumph in death, and eternal happiness in heaven. From the sacred oracles they instruct, convince, and persuade us. They "warn us night and day with tears" to "flee from the wrath to come"—to make our calling and election sure." What a gracious expedient is this!

And besides all these, the Redeemer will use the governments of



earth for the purposes of his mercy. Monarchs and subjects, consciously or unconsciously, shall conspire to prepare the way for his triumphant march. "The very wrath of man shall praise him;" the laws of nature shall obey his will: science shall bring her ample treasures, and lay them submissively at his feet. Surely the perseverance of Christ is various in its expedients.

4. *It is against great difficulties.*—Sin, of course, in all its forms, stands opposed to the work attempted by the Saviour. With this, Satanic influence is largely combined. But there are four discouraging facts in the habits of men, which must be considered.

The first is the earthliness of sinners. However it may have been originally, it cannot be denied that there is at present a strong affinity between man and this lower world. To matter far more naturally than to spirit he looks for the relief of his woes, and the gratification of his desires. The "things that are seen," have far more power to attract and charm him than "the things that are not seen." Hence the acquisition of treasure here occupies much more of his attention than the laying up of treasure in heaven! What he shall eat, and drink, and wear absorb him so completely, that he has no time to study how he may glorify God! Life here is so dear to him, that he will not inquire how he may prepare to die, nor what is the value to him of life eternal! Indeed, such is his exceeding earthliness, that the most powerful influences from above can only rouse him to a few moments' reflection upon the wants of his higher nature, when, like the needle to the pole, he turns at once to his worldly pursuits, and grasps his treasures with the tenacity of despair. This is no extraordinary development of fallen humanity. It is peculiar to no age, to no land. From as far back as the dark history of man can be traced, it has mastered his intellect, absorbed his sensibilities, and controlled his will. The Saviour has met it at every step, in his persevering attempts to "set judgment in the earth." Hard, indeed, is the struggle by which it is overcome: ever and anon it rallies to the conflict; and after all the triumphs over it for near six thousand years, see what amazing strength it still possesses! Amongst the millions of earth, where moments are spent in spiritual employments, ages are devoted to earthly! For one who in thought, and feeling, and action, claims kindred with the skies, you meet with thousands who assert affinity to the earth. The perseverance of Christ is against all this, and still he is "not discouraged."

Next, the fondness for the ideal, in preference to the real. It is a painful fact that men are living, in the main, in an ideal world—are practicing upon themselves a gross and nearly universal fraud—exchanging, as sources of gratification, the Divine realities of time and eternity, for the phantoms of nature and sin. It is not the resources of his present condition, but of an imaginary future one upon which he depends for his happiness. No real form of home, or equipage, or power, is the model of his satisfied state.

In any of these there is enough to offend his taste, to degrade his ambition, to cramp his genius, and, upon the great whole, to reduce him to a level with his fellows. He soon learns enough of the trials and defects and dangers of any man he knows, not to wish exactly *his* position, and hence, an ideal existence, the forms of which are constantly floating before him, absorbs his attention, and enlists his feelings. To obtain this, he practically throws away the realities which alone deserve his consideration, and can render him happy. Behold now the extremes of his folly and the greatness of his errors! Total depravity is his real condition, but high moral excellence his ideal. Enmity against God is his real habit of mind, but high reverence for the principles of rectitude his ideal! Danger of eternal damnation his real state, but almost certainty of heaven his ideal! When the duty of repentance is urged home upon his conscience, his fancied security defeats the effort. Despite the real claims of reciprocity, he prefers the imaginary pleasures of injustice, fraud, and oppression! If the reality of the Divine favor be placed in competition with the ideal benefits of human, he prefers the latter—the unreal joys of sin to the sublime pleasures of holiness—the fancied glories of earth to the changeless glories of heaven!

Nations too run the round of dreaming life, and grasping the shadow lose the prize. The permanence and splendor of empire are placed now in the triumph of the monarch, and now in the elevation of the people—now in concession, and now in grinding to the earth all aspirants for liberty—now in the ignorance, and now in the education of the masses—now in peace and now in war. They seek relief from the evils of the social state at one time in action, at another in re-action—now in enacting, and now in repealing laws—now in constructing, and now in destroying constitutions—now in the stringent regime of a religious establishment, and now in the grossest licentiousness. They fly at one moment to universal faith, at another to universal skepticism. Thus they forget utterly the sovereign power of that simple truth, "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." This is the real—the defined, the rejected real, in which alone the imperishable honor of a nation consists.

This is a mere intimation of the formidable power of the ideal, as it has usurped the place of the real, in this raving, bedlam, headlong world. With the whole of it the blessed Saviour has had to contend for these thousands of years. He seeks to wake the soul of man from this bewildering dream—to arrest this wild search for things that are not, and confer eternal blessedness in the things that are. Now, by reflecting upon the vast results which would follow the entire devotion of the race to Divine realities, we shall extend our convictions of the immense power of fiction in preventing the establishment of justice in the earth. But how it exalts our opinion of the perseverance of Christ, to find that he is not discouraged, though the world he seeks to save constantly prefers a dream or a shadow to the richest gifts of his love.

Next a cold individualism presents itself in opposition to the benevolent purposes of the Redeemer. In man's intended state, he is the brother of his fellow-man. His heart beats in unison with the great heart of humanity. He forms a willing, happy part of one grand and perfect whole. He needs the universal life of that social system which God designed, infinitely more than that system needs him. Had the fall left so much of Jehovah's work untouched, how speedily might the renovating life run through the mass. But under the action of sin, the selfish element has risen above the social! *The individual* has reached an importance far exceeding the whole race! How will an act or scheme affect *me* is the great question, not how will it affect the world. If God commands us to feed the hungry—to educate the ignorant—to send the gospel to the heathen—to give the Bible to the world, the sufferer must bear his anguish, and the messenger of salvation must delay his errand of mercy, until, with the exactness of numbers, it can be ascertained how it will affect the comforts, the luxuries, the honor of *the individual*! Alas! how frequently will even the suspicion of danger here give the negative to the most importunate demands of human wretchedness. And though sinners are perishing by thousands, and though the voice of Jesus is calling in tones of melting love, and beseeching earnestness for help to rescue the purchase of his blood, the most capricious demands of *the individual* must have the preference. The world must move on to perdition until it is perfectly compatible with the temporal interests—the personal convenience—and imagined honor of the individual to send them the word of life! Let any man, if he can, repel this degrading charge. Let him prove the aspersion false: he shall have our gratitude. But he cannot. His search for vindicating facts will show him mind in all its energies, running out into the world's extreme, taxing man and beast, water, earth, and air, for selfish purposes, and demanding large revenues of praise for the favors it has yielded by the way, to importunate want. But against all this the Saviour perseveres. The salvation of the world must be achieved though it be done in detail. "He will not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth."

Finally, we notice the misdirection of the philosophical spirit. Philosophy is a real want and a natural result of humanity. And could it from the beginning have exerted its strength in tracing the relation of man to God—of men to each other, and the relation of all phenomena to their final moral causes; had it summed up all its discoveries in the practical and the good, what immense power it would have wielded for the benefit of the race.

But now see it satisfied in tracing the relations of one particle of matter to another—its position, self—its aim, science—its scope, creation with God and eternity omitted, or only casually mentioned—and its results, infidelity! What system of philosophy, physical or metaphysical, has the Bible for its stand-point—the glory of God for its object—eternity for its sphere, and the

salvation of souls for its final cause? Alas! the very tendency which God designed to lead immortal spirits to himself has borne them far from him. It has expended itself in false and impracticable theories for the relief of human woes. It has generated a pride of opinion which scorns to obtain a knowledge of the essential good from the meek and lowly Saviour. The defeats of ages have not sufficed to teach it discretion—to check its wild and visionary schemes for dispensing with regeneration, and expelling God from the universe. Of the radical misdirection of the philosophical spirit, no other proof is needed than the fact that it does not end in faith. The legitimate tendency of all true philosophy is to simple faith—faith in God, in the Bible, in the Redeemer, in heaven and hell. What then can be said of that which levels its shafts at the mediatorial throne, and defies the power of Jehovah? No just understanding of its evils can be possible to us. Its worst manifestations are not in systems formally elaborated and set forth. It infuses its deadly poison into the secret thoughts of men. It penetrates the very foundations of virtue. It artfully insinuates itself even into the sacred desk, and from the very watch-towers of Zion, holds friendly intercourse with her vilest foes. But still the Saviour is not discouraged. Regarding these as mere specimens of the barriers in his way, I am sure it must be conceded his perseverance is against great difficulties.

4. *It is long continued.*—If for twenty years the father strives to reclaim his prodigal son, he is deemed a model of forbearance. But if, for the whole of the time, this child of Belial should use every opportunity to insult and revile that father; if he should repay every act of his love with violence, and still no word of severity should escape the paternal lips, but entreaties and tears of affection should respond to this rage, till life itself yields to grief, what language could express the astonishment of the world at such God-like patience? But what is the endurance of filial ingratitude for a score of years, or for a century, compared with the perseverance of Christ in his mediatorial work? All the ingratitude of men, and the rage of demons, for near six thousand years, have not been enough to drive him from the seat of mercy. Every wave of corruption that has dashed against the throne has been answered by a smile! Every word of blasphemy, by the language of tenderness and love! Generation after generation has risen in fiercest war against the Son of God, laughed, and wept, and cursed, and died! But the next generation has found him there with his hands of compassion extended to receive them! The vilest sinner that shall be born upon earth will find him on the mediatorial throne, waiting to hail him with the offer of mercy as he vents his rage against the Lamb of God. The fury of hell has assaulted his position in ceaseless storms, since the first look of compassion was cast upon a ruined world, but there he remains in the fullness of infinite merit—in the calmness of unlimited power—in the intelligence of omniscient wisdom, and in the activity

of exhaustless love. And he will remain until the trump of judgment shall sound. Verily the perseverance of Christ in its action, is righteous in character, various in its expedients, against great difficulties, and long continued.

### III. THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS TRIUMPHS.

1. *The triumph indicated.*—By prophecy, by the nature of Christ, and by the mode of his action. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."—Here the *fact* of triumph is clearly indicated. To doubt it must therefore be infidelity.—The nature of the triumph is set forth in the following glowing imagery: "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."—Here is the triumph of the moral over the physical. The strength of the lion shall yield to the influence of the little child! The dominion of "the earthly" must come to an end, and the ascendancy of the spiritual be complete.—The triumph of the real over the ideal. "Righteousness" and "faithfulness," the two great realities, shall gird the Redeemer, and the vast fictions of sin and infidelity must disappear before him.—The triumph of the social over the selfish. The wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the child and the asp, all mingling in perfect harmony, symbolize the social state, under the peaceful reign of God's Messiah.—And the triumph of the true over the false, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The knowledge of the Lord is the soul of truth, the sum of philosophy, the centre of science. The earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord must therefore secure the universal prevalence of truth, the right direction of the philosophical spirit, and the purification of every department of science.

This, in general, is the triumph of Christ, indicated. To understand, in any adequate degree, these sublime indications, we must study with deep penetration every prophecy of the Bible, every attribute of the Son of God, and every development of his history,—a study which may well engage the master-minds of the race. However intense and glowing may be our visions of Messiah's reign, a deeper understanding of its Divine indications

must render them more so. Such is the momentous personal interest which we have in the theme, that we should pause before it till our souls themselves become concentrated faith; till time is annihilated, and heaven and earth are wrapped in the blaze of millennial day.

2. *The triumph progressive.*—The purposes of God did not include the immediate conquest of the world. There are reasons to believe the true nature and destiny of man did not admit of it. Nor were the triumphs of Christ all reserved for the final period of his reign. They commenced with the first fact of redemption, and every additional fact was a triumph over all the obstacles opposed to its occurrence; and the series of facts which make up his history, have indicated the progress of his victories. These facts, heralded by prophets, have astonished the world by their striking significance and miraculous power.

Principles have also been gradually developed, which have grappled with their antagonists in the presence of sinners. Atonement by sacrifice has appeared against inexorable doom—Divine influence against human obduracy—pardon against the enormity of sin—life against death—holiness against depravity—liberty against fate—and finally, “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” against adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.” Long and severe has been the contest between these mysterious forces. To the eye of man it may have appeared doubtful on which side victory would turn. But by universal consent it ought to “turn on the Lord’s side,” and this itself is a triumph.

But the triumph progressive may be traced in the application of these great principles. Mark it in the individual:—At the earliest dawn of reason the attempt is commenced to rescue him from the ruins of the fall. Conviction for sin, and a sense of duty to God, are among his first impressions. These gracious influences increase from year to year, but there are no indications of surrender. Indeed, the depravity of his nature gathers strength from opposition, until from his outward vileness it begins to be feared that he is left “to believe a lie, that he might be damned.” But at length his attention, his whole intellect, is conquered. His heart and his will yield to the sway of an invisible power, and you may hear him say—

“Nay, but I yield, I yield—  
I can hold out no more;  
I sink, by dying love compelled,  
And own thee conqueror.”

A new and glorious life springs up within him. But he gradually discovers his remaining depravity, and it is probably long before this is totally removed, and the triumph in his entire nature complete. Even then the war is not ended. He can resist no worldly allurements—no temptation, but by that faith which



transfers the battle to the Saviour. *His* power conquers every foe, even death itself, and the soul, emancipated, finds its home at last in the bosom of God. This is an outline of his engagements with the world, and of his gradual triumphs over it. Early in its history he set in motion a train of expedients for its recovery from ruin. Long darkness brooded over it, but the Saviour was not discouraged. He triumphed in the salvation of individuals. He triumphed in the deluge. He triumphed in Egypt. He triumphed in Palestine—at the tomb of Joseph—in Germany—in France—in England—in America; and at this moment his triumphs are spreading “from sea to sea,” and “from the rivers to the ends of the earth.” Progressive civilization—progressive Christianity, is all the triumph of Christ. It is true, there is still a vast amount of iniquity upon earth. Sin rages with fearful malice, but the energy of Christ must conquer in the future as it has done in the past. His gracious expedients are developing power that must be irresistible. Not a principle of evil, not a style of sin exists but what has been overcome. Can any man point to grosser darkness than has yielded to the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness—more savage fury than that which his presence has tamed—viler sinners than have been already subdued, or deeper pollution than his blood has washed away? The world, then, in effect, is already conquered. “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him; having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

3. *The triumph complete.*—This is revealed partly to experience, but mainly to faith. The principles, and many of the facts involved in the final triumph have been graciously given to our own enjoyment. We know what is meant by the conquest of love. We have only to take the facts of a sinner saved by grace, and suppose them carried directly out into all the world, to have a tolerably distinct idea of the triumph of the Saviour accomplished. The power of faith enlarges the conception, and increases the brightness of the scene. The moral is to triumph over the physical—the real over the ideal—the social over the selfish—the true over the false.

We may now pause and contemplate the results of these mighty changes. In every part of the world the facts and forms of matter shall lose their control over the affections of men, the spiritual shall subdue the earthly, and the whole living race shall be absorbed in the glory of God. All ideal and visionary schemes will be lost in the richness and power of Divine realities: all cold and degrading selfishness merged in one grand and glorious Christian fellowship. Love—“perfect love,” will fill every heart, beam from every eye, break from every tongue. Every one,

from the youngest to the oldest, shall be moved by the same rich, overflowing benevolence that gushes from the heart of the Saviour. The philosophical spirit will have turned all its energies toward God and eternity. Minds with quickened power will rush out into every field of science to gather new truths, to illustrate the character of God and the reign of Messiah. In the light of indications clear to faith, even from our present standpoint, we may see much of the glories of such a triumph. What relief from the evils that now crush our enfeebled spirits—from the dismal night of infidelity—from the cruel injustice that wrongs our fellow-men—from the fell impurities that invade the sacredness of virtue—from the fearful oaths and blasphemies that break upon our ears. But let us extend the view:—What purity in the church in that bright day—what holy spirituality, what unity and power—what universal knowledge of the Scriptures—what clearness and force in preaching—what growth in grace—what bursting joy and shouts of triumph and hallelujahs will rend the heavens. Governments will have found their legitimate final cause in the greatest good of the whole. What relief, then, from the intrigues of designing men—from anarchy and oppression—from vicious laws and defective administration. Harmony in feeling, in purpose, in action, will have emancipated the science of government from its only embarrassments. Kings and queens shall become nursing fathers and mothers in Israel. And in very deed “the nations and kingdoms of this earth shall become the nations and kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.”

From another stand-point we shall better see the moral beauties of a redeemed world. Removed to the heights of glory we shall look out upon the new creation, and in shouts of joy swell the loud anthem of praise that rolls up from every land beneath the sun. Another scene of amazing grandeur will open at the judgment; when the vast generations of man shall await their doom from the lips of the Redeemer; when at his terrific sentence the wicked shall “depart into everlasting fire”—and at his joyous command the righteous shall “enter into life eternal.” *Then shall the triumph be complete.*

1. *From the whole it appears that the Saviour has deserved to conquer.* His infinite merit, his unlimited power, his unfailing wisdom and exhaustless love are worthy of the triumphs indicated. His unwearied exertions for the lapse of ages, amid the revilings of his foes, have richly earned the victory. With what intense interest do we gaze upon him, as by the light of revelation he stands revealed—the mediator—in his toils and sufferings—in his entreaties and prayers, now in heaven; making the vast preparations which atonement requires; now on earth, proclaiming salvation—agonizing, dying—and again in heaven, betwixt guilty man and flaming justice, pleading for time, and moving the vast instrumentalities of redemption to save the souls of men. We watch every movement with deepest anxiety—tremble when victory seems doubtful, and rejoice with unutterable joy as he triumphs in the fearful strife.

2. *Chiefly we would urge the vast power of the Saviour's example.* We are soon weary under the burdens of the church—soon discouraged when we see how hard a world this is to save. We ask with intense concern, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever; doth his promise fail forevermore?" But let us listen to the answer of the holy prophet: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." How severe a rebuke to our alarm, our discouragements! While Jesus remains upon the mediatorial throne, shall we yield under the pressure of difficulties? While he prays for his enemies, shall we abandon them? God forbid. At every instant of despondency, in every moment of defeat, let us remember the perseverance of Christ—righteous in its action, various in its expedients, against great difficulties, and long continued. If the church would receive its impulse from the action of Christ—if *his mind* were infused throughout the mass of his disciples, what indomitable energy, what unconquerable resolution, what glorious triumph would mark her career.

3. *How strong is the encouragement from the assurances of success.* If we are inclined to despair, let us look at the triumph indicated, the triumph progressive, and the triumph complete. It must utterly destroy our unbelief to master these great and glorious truths. Nay, it must create A BURNING ZEAL TO COÖPERATE IN HIS LABORS, TO IMITATE HIS PERSEVERANCE, AND TO SHARE HIS TRIUMPHS. May God grant it, for Christ's sake.

---

## SERMON DXIII.

BY REV. S. D. BURCHARD,

Pastor of Thirteenth-Street Presbyterian Church, New York.

---

### THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself."—Exodus 19: 4.

THIS passage has reference to the interposition and care of God's providence over the children of Israel. It is highly figurative. As an eagle bears her young upon her wings, so God had carried his people on the uplifted wing of his providence. Afflicted and oppressed, he had interposed for their deliverance. He had shielded them amid persecution and peril. He had discomfited and confounded their enemies; had declared his interest in them by miracle and manifestation. The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night; the miraculous supply of food and wa-

ter; the defeat and destruction of their oppressors, are all illustrious examples of the Divine protection and providence.

A striking analogy may be traced between the children of Israel and our forefathers—the early settlers of this favored land. They too were oppressed and afflicted, and not permitted to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. At length they escaped from the land of cruel and oppressive laws, and came to this Western continent—the home which Providence had provided for them. Like the Israelites, they were sent into the wilderness to be educated, by danger and trial, for a noble destiny. Like the Israelites, they were compelled to do battle with the heathen and idolatrous tribes around them; but, like the Israelites, they were folded beneath the wing of a kind Providence. His ruling hand was as apparent in bringing our forefathers to this country, when yet a waste wilderness, and protecting them amid the perils of savage men, as it was when he led the Israelites out of Egypt and opened to them a passage through the Red Sea. If we study the features of their history, and the dealings of Divine Providence with them, we shall see how striking is the analogy, and how affectingly appropriate is the text to us as a nation. Or if we look back to the early history of this country, and contrast it with the present—if we compare its physical, political, educational, and religious aspects, *then* and *now*, we shall see how God has borne us, as on eagles' wings, and brought us to this land of heritage and blessing.

*The Past and the Present then, is the theme to which we propose to call your attention.* And, in the contrast and review, we hope to find abundant occasion of gratitude to God.

I. Let us, in the first place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in a *natural* or *physical* point of view. If we go back to the landing of the Pilgrims, we see a band of heroic men and women driven by oppression from their altars and their homes in the old world. Like the Israelites, they had dared the waste of waters, the tempest and the cold, in search of a country, where God had planted the wilderness, as the place of their worship, and reared the mountain as the altar on which to offer their humble and acceptable sacrifice. They wanted no ecclesiastical architecture, no cathedral pomp of pillars and fretted vault, to impress them with religious awe. The broad, all-brilliant arch of heaven was their chosen temple, and the soft gush of bird-song was music more grateful to their taste than the chanted vespers of an ignorant and idolatrous service. God had kindly sheltered their little bark, as it plowed its feeble way onward through waters, which scarcely before had bathed with foam the prow of an emigrant ship. Like a lone bird, weary and wounded with its fierce battle with the storm, that bark, deeply freighted with the fathers and mothers of a great nation, folded its sails upon a new and inhospitable coast. We see this tempest-worn ship lying there, so desolate upon the dreary shore; a few Indian fires sent up their dismal smoke in the dense forest; a few

wigwams lay buried in the snows of that ever-to-be-remembered winter, but the smoke of savage fires, and the roof that sheltered savage life, afforded no hospitality to them. Years passed on—the wilderness is subdued—the bleak coast, where the sea-gull hovered in loneliness, is whitened by the sails of a thousand ships—the barren hills of New England are changed into fertile fields. But beyond this, to the westward, was one vast wilderness, “one boundless contiguity of shade.” Nature, in all her rugged wildness and beauty was there, but the music of her winds, moaning through the tall forest trees, and the thunder of her booming cataracts were unheard by the ear of civilized man. Her treasures of mineral wealth, no diviner’s rod had yet discovered; her exhaustless granite lay piled up the mountain sides, as now; her rivers flowed in the same channels, they have deepened for centuries, and with the same grandeur plowed their way to the ocean; her immense inland seas spread their mirrored surface to the bright sunshine, or tossed their waves to the stormy winds and tempests; her cataracts, which now attract the admiring gaze of travelers from every distant land, raised their eternal anthem, filling the poor Indian, as he drew near with mysterious awe, lifting his thoughts up from nature to nature’s God, whose glory appeared in the gorgeous rainbow which overarched the stream, whose voice was heard in the loud thunder of the falling waters, and whose resistless power was symbolized in the rushing flood, and in the hushed billows of the dark abyss. Where now wave the golden harvest-fields awaiting the sickle of the reaper, or rise the beautiful village and the crowded city, resonant with the cheerful hum of business, there stood in thick array and silent grandeur the mountain pine and the tall oaks of the forest, and there trod, in his native pride and freedom, like a lord of creation, the dusky warrior, the pride of the wood, the man without a tear.

Our far-reaching rivers, which once were navigated only by the wild man in his bark canoe, now bear upon their bosoms floating palaces, which move like a thing of life, interchanging the intelligence and the commerce of nations.

Our western forests and prairies, but a few years since traversed only by the buffalo, the deer and the wild panther, flying before the deadly arrow of the red man, are now brought under a vigorous culture; the voice of melody and of praise has succeeded to the startling battle-cry of savage men. Surely the wilderness has been converted into a fruitful field, and the desert has been made to rejoice and “blossom as the rose.”

“Look now abroad—another race has filled  
These populous borders—wide the wood recedes,  
And towns shoot up, and fertile realms are tilled;  
The land is full of harvests and green meads;  
Streams numberless that many a fountain feeds,  
Twine, disembowered, and give to sun and breeze  
Their virgin waters.”

Where once was only the wild war-path or the Indian trail, are

canals and railroads, bringing the most distant points of our country into almost immediate contact; annihilating time and space; removing local prejudices and dissensions, linking different and distant parts of this Union into one grand and glorious confederacy.

Our city, which a hundred years since numbered a population only of a few thousand, now contains its hundreds of thousands, and is rapidly taking a stand among the first cities on the globe. Our fortifications, which once excited the scorn and ridicule of our enemies, have more than once humbled the scoffer, and now bid defiance to the world. Our army, in case of invasion or extraordinary emergency, though called from the work-shop and the harvest-field, are bold, formidable, and have been always victorious. "A little one has indeed become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation."

Within comparatively a short period, these changes and many more, have been wrought, showing that we have been borne as on eagles' wings, so rapid and unparalleled has been our progress. Subjects of contrast, of admiring, astonishing contrast multiply as the mind adverts to the past and contemplates the present, causing us to live, as it were, in some fairy region, and to be the subjects of some magic agency, rather than among practical realities, the results of the ingenuity, the industry, the indomitable perseverance of man, guided however by Him, without whose blessing the wisest instrumentalities fail of success. In such a review and comparison of the past with the present, do we find no occasion for gratitude to Him, who has emphatically been the God and the guardian of this nation, who has borne us as on eagles' wings? Surely, in such a review, we must be assured that,

"Ours is a land, of every land the pride  
Of Heaven, o'er all the world beside."

II. Let us, in the second place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in a *political* point of view. We need not detail the circumstances of cruelty and oppression, which compelled the Puritans of England, and the Huguenots of France, to seek a refuge and a home on this Western continent. Brave, heroic, and strong in faith, committing themselves to the protection of Divine Providence, they came to lay the foundations of a new and mighty empire. In all their ways, they acknowledged God and recognized the rights of man. Religious freedom, or the right to worship God according to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, was their great and sacred motto. Religion, untrammelled by law, uncoerced by government, was the religion which they sought and were determined to enjoy. It was their high purpose to govern men by the fear of the Lord; to exhibit the precepts, apply the motives, and realize the dispositions which the Word of God inculcates and his Spirit inspires—to imbue their children, their families, and their civil polity with the wisdom which cometh from above. They had no projects of human



device, no theories of untried efficacy. They hung all their hopes of civil and religious prosperity upon the Word of God and the power of his Spirit. Nor was theirs the presumptuous hope of grace without works. It was by training men for self-government; it was by the diffusion of light and the spread of truth, by intellectual culture and moral influence, that they expected to enjoy and perpetuate civil liberty.

———"Untamed  
To the refining subtleties of slaves,  
They brought an happy government along;  
Formed by that freedom, which, with secret voice,  
Impartial Nature teaches all her sons."

But just as they were beginning to taste the sweets of religious freedom, a threatening storm-cloud appeared. The political horizon became dark, and a heavy thunder-bolt seemed ready to fall upon their cherished and early hopes. But they were neither intimidated nor disheartened. They had been trained to meet disaster and trial. They had been educated in a school well calculated to develop the heroic, the lofty, the unbending in man. The King of England determined that the colonies should share the pecuniary burdens accumulated by the wars prosecuted during the reign of his predecessors. They resisted on the ground that the mother country had no right to tax them without their consent. They had come to this country without asking the protection of the British crown. No armed soldiery had been solicited, or sent to guard them from the attacks of savage foe. They had fought their own battles; hewed down their own forests. planted their institutions, and were struggling on to greatness, without the aid or co-operation of England. They were willing to contribute a reasonable share of means for the relief of the burdens of the mother country, but they insisted on doing it by a vote of their own legislative assemblies, in which they were fairly represented, and they appealed to the justice of the King and his Cabinet to listen to and grant their request. Their appeal was answered only by indignity, and by an oppressive enforcement of the obnoxious enactments. The tax, in itself, was not great, but it was the *principle* which they were determined to resist. And they did resist by the force of arms, until British pride was humbled, and our independence recognized, and we took a stand, as a free people, among the nations of the earth. The prominent actors in that drama were high-minded, moral, and *religious* men, governed by the purest patriotism and love of liberty, whose *principles* were admired, even by those who condemned and opposed their acts. Seldom, if ever, has the world seen an assemblage of precisely such men. They were statesmen, as if by intuition, with minds of the highest order—intelligent, sagacious, determined in purpose, cool in action, eminently wise in counsel, brave, skillful, and undaunted in the field. It would seem as if God had raised them up purposely for the exigency, and endowed them with high qualifications for the difficult and momen-

tous work they achieved. They were borne through the stormy scenes of the revolution, as on the wing of Divine Providence, and the same wing brooded over their counsels, when they devised and adopted our national Constitution, an honor to their intellects and the charter of our freedom. It is republican and democratic. It recognizes the rights of the people; the right to choose their own rulers and make their own laws—the right to be heard, through their representatives, in the halls of legislation—the right to petition for a redress of grievances—the right to read their Bibles, without the restrictions of Priest or Pontiff—and the right to adopt any form of ecclesiastical government which they deem most in accordance with the Scriptures. According to our representative and republican form of government, the rulers are not the arbitrary oppressors, but the obedient servants of the people, and directly responsible to their constituents. Amid the excitement and frenzy of political debate, there is one voice to which they must listen—the voice of the people. This is the grand tribunal of our country.

Our laws are our own, and they can be altered or amended to suit the will of the people. And they are designed not to favor the few at the expense of the many. No man, be his condition what it may, can be touched in his person, his property, or his reputation, without the right to challenge the assailant and refer the issue to a process of law. No man can be punished as a criminal, until fairly tried and convicted by a jury of his country. Such is our system of free government—the best and cheapest in the world, supported by the people without feeling the pecuniary pressure. It is also safe and practicable. We are now in the 75th year of our national independence, and we are still borne on eagles' wings. We are not going to decay. We may have sectional jealousies, and strong conflicts of interest and opinion, but the wings of our eagle will soar aloft to a calmer region amid the plaudits of the people. They love their country, her constitution and her laws, and are ready to forego any local advantage for the sake of preserving the Union. And as for foreign interposition, we have passed beyond the peradventure of peril or defeat. Let any five of the strong monarchies of Europe combine to subvert the liberties of this country, and attach us to some foreign crown, and you would see the spectacle of a people coming up to the work, shoulder to shoulder, absolutely *wild* under the power of national enthusiasm, ready to steep the soil with their blood, and make the whole heavens ring with the thunder of arms. The experiment would involve a development of our character never to be forgotten in the annals of the human race, that, in its grandeur and awfulness, would seem fresh after the lapse of a thousand years. This people love their government, love their free institutions; it is a broad, deep, intelligent love. Set this people down in the heart of Russia, and the old monarch would tremble upon his throne. The very Cossacks and serfs of the soil would burn with the inspiration of freemen. The spirit of liberty, kindled in

this country, has already gone across the waters. It has entered France, Italy, and Hungary; it beats in the bosom of millions, and though the bolt of every chain has again been driven, yet the despots of Europe can no more hold the heaving mass, than the chains of Xerxes could hold the Hellespont, vexed with storms. Floods have been poured upon the rising flame, but they can no more extinguish it, than they can extinguish the fires of *Ætna*. Still it burns, and still the mountain heaves and murmurs, and soon it will explode with voices, and thunderings, and earthquakes. Then will the trumpet of jubilee sound, and earth's oppressed millions will leap from the dust and shake off their chains, thrilled with ecstasies and ideas of freedom! The world is hastening to such a destiny, and our land is cheering the nations on in their struggle for universal emancipation. There is but one voice that adds discord to the music of our applause, and that is the voice of three millions of human beings, in the very heart of this country, crying aloud for freedom!

III. Let us, in the third place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in an *educational* point of view. I design to use the term education in a very generic sense, implying the progress and improvement made in the sciences and arts for the past hundred years. New and important discoveries have been made in astronomy, enlarging our conceptions of the heavenly bodies, filling our minds with sublimer views of the Divine Being—in natural philosophy, developing its latent principles for the comfort and convenience of man—in botany, giving every flower and shrub a meaning and a voice—in geology, bringing its every newly discovered fact and feature to harmonize with revealed truth—in electricity, that mysterious agent, which seemed to bid defiance to all power, save the infinite and the boundless. What a wonderful triumph of art is that invention, which carries thought along the regions of the atmosphere with the rapidity of lightning, and with all the accuracy of typography! It seems more like a dream of romance than sober reality. We can scarcely realize that our country has become, as it were, one great speaking gallery, where a whisper is heard from one extremity of the land to the other, almost as soon as uttered. The application of steam to mechanical and commercial purposes, is comparatively a recent discovery, and yet who is not amazed at the perfection it has already reached? Rivers are navigated against wind and current—the ocean bridged—mines explored—the most massive machinery moved—manual labor and the labor of beasts of burden, to a great extent, superseded by this wonder-working agent, now under the control and made to facilitate the movements, add to the convenience, and give success to the enterprises of man. In all the higher branches of education, progress has distinguished the past; and in common school education, how amazing has been the change! One hundred years ago, how limited were the facilities for learning and improvement! The common school system, which is now the ornament and glory of our country, had

not been matured and adopted. Our forefathers felt the want and took early steps to meet it. It had been the policy of the land of their birth to keep the masses in ignorance; they determined that the land of their adoption should be characterized by a different and wiser policy. Hence, no sooner was the foundation-stone of the church laid, than the school-house and the college arose, and the patron of piety was also the patron of learning. There was no talk of sects, nor parties, but of *union*—the union of hearts that loved God and throbbed with a holy pulsation for posterity and the race. Since then, we have been borne on eagles' wings.

Colleges and common schools have been planted everywhere throughout the land. They are free and open to all. No barriers are thrown around their threshold; no sect, nor creed, nor wealth, nor aristocratic pride can claim pre-eminence here. Our colleges, unlike the proud and moss-covered universities of the East, seek no solitude and embowering shades and seclusion, like reputed orbs of glory, viewless from the immense clouds, but as open suns and stars leading on and cheering every one in his pursuit after knowledge.

The first thing which strikes a traveler, as he enters the old world, is the immense soldiery, that everywhere meet his eye. Why are these stationed at every corner and nook of the land? Not to protect the rights of the many, but to guard the rulers from the people, and keep their crowns well balanced upon their heads. We, on the contrary, can point to our common schools, and say, "These are our standing army, the grand palladium of our liberties." It has ever been the policy of despotism, whether civil or religious, to monopolize knowledge, to enslave the popular understanding, and thus to hold the great mass of humanity passive and quiet. This is one of the great difficulties in the way of popular government in Europe. The truth is, the people, as a people, are not sufficiently intelligent for this purpose. In a sudden burst of passion, they may shake down a throne, but either they will go into anarchy, which is far worse, or some proud remnant of fallen greatness, chosen in the fury of popular excitement, will soon impose chains, perhaps golden chains, yet *real* chains, upon the delighted captives—the *people*. Look at France, her peasantry too republican for monarchy, too ignorant for a republic! See 100,000 soldiers stationed in Paris to keep the people from destroying their own government. See 30,000 Republicans sail into Italy to put down a republic, and at the point of the bayonet re-establish the most accursed system of ecclesiastical and civil despotism, which ever enslaved and degraded man! We see no such scenes enacted in this country, and, for the simple reason, that the laboring classes, those who control the ballot-box, are intelligent, and know how to appreciate civil liberty and the rights of man. True we have ignorance here, but it is mostly imported. Our native population, our farmers, our mechanics, our merchants, for the most part, are a thinking, reading,

intelligent population. And our peculiar institutions, our common school system, *free to the poorest*, have made them such. "But still," says a foreign critic, "how exceedingly raw you appear in this country; everything lies in the rough; your blunt manners, your provincialisms, all your ideas need to be taken across the waters to a planing-machine." This is the impression and the language of some, who look only at the surface of things, who are fascinated with the tinsel and glitter of royalty. But if we have not all the external polish, which adorns the more favored circles of Europe, we have intelligence more generally diffused, scattered, like the sun's radiance, over the masses of the people. England has always been able to boast of some tall pillars of intellectual light, but they have only made the surrounding gloom and darkness the more impressively visible. Our plan is to have a large number of *fair* men, who can do their own thinking, and do it well. Once in a while, we produce a great man, to let the world know what we are capable of doing. Such men we have, and such we have always had, and they will not suffer in comparison with the greatest men of the old world. But we prefer to kindle up a great many lights, which, like the thickly scattered lamps of a city, illumine every street and alley. This is our plan, and it is the best one on the earth. I want no country or system that finishes up a few men, called *noblemen*, and leaves the great mass of men in the rust. I prefer to distribute this polish, to have it a little less concentrated, so that common people can get at it and share in the lustre. Who would pour all the light of the sun through a gas-pipe, for the sake of having one bright spot? Or who would think of making one tremendous bonfire, to excite the gaze of the collected throng, rather than kindle a fire on every man's hearth-stone? This is what our system of education is aiming to do—to diffuse light over the great multitude, who hold the destinies of this country at their own disposal,—to bring every man's conscience under the power of truth and the grace of God. This is our plan for preserving the Union, and perpetuating the institutions for which our fathers shed their blood.

IV. Let us, in the fourth place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in a *religious* point of view. If we compare Europe with our own country, we do virtually contrast the past with the present; for her institutions are stereotyped; what *was*, is *now*, and the evils which our forefathers suffered are the legitimate and necessary evils resulting from a union of Church and State. In England, where monarchy exists in its mildest form, Episcopacy is the reigning type of Christianity. The Queen is the visible head of the church. She appoints the archbishops, who, in virtue of their ecclesiastical office, are members of the House of Lords, mingling in the heat and strife of political debate, receiving an income of from 15 to £20,000 a year, the owners of palaces, and yet, *the successors of the apostles!* They move amid the most splendid circles of gayety and fashion, and on retiring from Parliament, administer, within their baronial precincts,

an extended patronage, appoint their bishops, wield an absolute sceptre over the inferior clergy, and by an indefinite prerogative awe and control the laity, who are taxed to oppression to support this ponderous hierarchy. Can the fruits of the Spirit flourish in such a soil? Like the deadly Upas, this wide-spreading tree casts its pestiferous shade over bishops, curates, pastors, and people.

The bad effects of this union are thus described by one who has recently left the establishment. "The church and the world are completely fused at the table of the Lord. The theatres, the ball-rooms, and the race courses, may pour their whole contents into the assemblies of communicants, and be welcomed by the churches as members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Believers are yoked together with unbelievers; the righteous with the unrighteous; the worshipers of Christ with the worshipers of Belial. Men of a schismatical spirit, who cast out their brethren, fierce successors of Diotrephes, violating the law of charity with shameless party zeal, kneel side by side with Christ's disciples at the altar, from which the most estimable and faithful brethren of dissenting churches are rudely excluded. The covetous, the railer, and even those who are generally thought to be fornicators and drunkards, may take their place at the Lord's table as easily as in their pew. Pastors who are ignorant, and even irreligious, remain under the sanction of law to misrepresent the gospel and mislead the congregation:" and yet the people are compelled to support them.

The evils of this union of Church and State are much more apparent in all Papal countries, where the Pope is the universal sovereign, to whom kings and emperors render a servile homage, and where millions of ignorant and degraded subjects are utter strangers to personal and political freedom. The Pope appears as the embodied reality of that prophetic delineation of the "Man of Sin," which is given by the apostle, when he says, "He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." He sits as an arbiter over the human conscience, the infallible judge of right and wrong, and from his decision there is no appeal. The church, under his jurisdiction, is alike infallible, and her dogmas and decisions ultimate and binding. And though she may teach the most strange and unscriptural doctrines—that the Virgin Mary, instead of Jesus, is "a mediator between God and men,"—that the humble confession of a penitent to God, like that of the Publican, is unavailing, unless breathed first privately into the ears of a Romish priest,—that the dead are not only subjects of prayer, but that they can be so deified by canonization, as to be objects of prayer,—that the probability of a man's escape from purgatory depends upon the amount of money which his friends are willing to pay for masses to be said in Latin for his soul, and that the eternal and immutable law of God, which sweeps over a universe



and an eternity, the embodied transcript of Divine purity and glory, is so accommodating, that it can be safely set aside, if the Pope sees fit to grant, as he has often granted, a plenary indulgence to sin,—these doctrines are taught by the church, and having all the enginery of the state at her disposal, her arguments are often the agonies of the dungeon, or the flames of martyrdom. She stoutly denies the right to question her infallibility. Whenever her errors of doctrine, or corruptions in practice, have been exposed, she has silenced their arguments by brute force. When they brought to light the scandalous immoralities of her clergy, she punished them, as slanderers, with the sword. When they sought permission to live and act according to the Word of God, she handed them over to the tender mercies of the inquisition. We cannot forget that it was the church of Rome which slaughtered the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and other Christians, before the Reformation, and the Huguenots of France, and the Scottish and Irish Protestants since. Inspired prophecy describes her as the "woman drunken with the blood of saints," as "the mystery of iniquity;" and the history of her cruelties fully justifies the prophetic declaration.

This union of Church and State is both corrupting and persecuting—it corrupts the state and it corrupts the church—it corrupts the subjects and functionaries of both—it forms a *union* of tyrannies—a conspiracy of popes and kings to enslave a race; the former determining what is true by authority, the latter coercing assent, and both robbing human nature of its dearest rights. If any struggle for liberty, they are met by the spear of kings and the thunders of the Vatican. This is the double iron yoke, under which mankind have groaned for centuries.

Happily, in this country, it has no reality. In the very infancy of our existence the Protestant principle took deep root in this wild soil. The tree once planted, was watered with prayers, with the tears of hearts made desolate by violence and oppression, with the blood of martyrs freely shed in resisting tyranny. Our forefathers, the framers of this government, instructed by the terrible lessons of the past, fully conceived the idea of a church not dependent on the state, whose internal economy might be left to herself, whose progress is in proportion to the power of truth and the grace of God in converting sinners. No one sect is preferred above another, for none are known, as such, in the government, the influences of moral causes arbitrating their destiny. The immense blessing consequent, it is hardly possible to appreciate, or for it to be sufficiently thankful. Think of an exemption from the great evils incident to a union of church and state. Think of the style of character which an independent church must necessarily beget or sink into decay. Having no adventitious and false life, she must live in herself, by faith alone, or perish. She has no lordly revenues, no gorgeous ritual, no pomp of external service with which to encourage the hopes or foster the pride of worldly men. She has no civil powers to abuse, no bribes to

receive or to extend. She can affect the state only as she affects individuals, by the light of her piety and the power of truth. An educated and devoted ministry—a good character, sound doctrine, and the promise of the Spirit, are her only patrimony. “The weapons of her warfare are not carnal, but mighty to the pulling down of strong holds.”

Such is the religion of this country. It has blessed it from the beginning. It constitutes the corner-stone of our American Republic. It permeates our civil polity and all our free institutions. It is thoroughly *Protestant* in its character. It is this principle which has stimulated enterprise and made our land what it is—the glory of all lands. It is not because of our origin, not because the Anglo-Saxon blood flows in our veins—it is not because of the extent of our territory, or the fertility of our soil, or even because of the excellence of our institutions, that the wings of our eagle are poised far above every other nation on the globe. It is because we are *Protestants*. We have indeed a better government than Austria, because we have a better people; but our Protestant religion has made them better. Take away our religion and you introduce a despotism, or the anarchy which makes it necessary.

Our country is *Protestant*; the men who laid the foundation of its greatness were Protestants, and their mantle has fallen upon their children. And though we have different ecclesiastical organizations, and different forms of worship, we all rally to the Protestant standard. Here we stand on one broad and brotherly foundation, with hearts thoroughly responsive to the great principles of the reformation. We have a “Christian Alliance,” which embraces in its fraternal union the Protestants of the world! Let this be known throughout the dominions of the Pope, and it will hush the shout of triumph, which Romanists are disposed to raise over our fancied disunion and anticipated fall. No man, who has marked the Providence which has borne us, as a nation, thus far on eagle’s wings, can believe “that we have been led out of Egypt to fall by the Amorites.”

If now and then you see a recreant from Protestantism, taking the backward track towards Rome and the dark ages, with affinities leaning in the direction of the mitre, the crosier, and the chair of St. Peter, vacated by the uprising of the spirit of the age, think not that we are becoming Papists in this country. No. Protestantism is the deep, firm, fixed form of the religious sentiment in this land. It is a sentiment in harmony with our institutions, the offspring of thought and free inquiry, guided by the teachings of revealed truth. It does not go by authority, dogmatic, simply, because it is old; oppressive, because it has the disposition and the power; gaping and moping in indolent stupor over obsolete and exploded wisdom. It goes by the light of truth, the power of thought, and the impelling wants of millions perishing in ignorance and sin. It operates in a very simple and practical way. Warm up a man with the current religion of this country,

and he will not dream of hunting for truth in the musty records of ancient convents, and there simmering his piety over the flame of a passive holiness. Neither will he think that a surplice, all silken and white, is necessary to symbolize the bright and pure light of his inner experience. Neither will he cry out for a cathedral, with images of departed saints, crucifixes of gold, and altars of ivory. But his cry will be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Labor for the glory of God and the welfare of man will be the absorbing thought of his inquiring mind. Practical benevolence and not a passive sentimentalism marks the Protestant type of piety. It invents and applies instrumentalities for doing good, for removing oppressive burdens, for diffusing light, for facilitating the progress and happiness of our race. To use a figure; it is a tree, rooted in the soil of gospel truth, on whose trunk hang the branches of benevolence, pouring the strong life—giving sap into all their leaves and flowers—lifting its boughs so high and spreading them so far, that the pendant fruit may drop on all the world. Such is Protestant Christianity—the Christianity of this country, and destined to spread its hallowing influence over the entire globe. The eyes of all nations are now turned to us—the hopes of the world, under God, are dependent upon our exertions. We occupy the vantage ground of an immeasurable superiority for striking a blow for the downfall of error, and the triumph of truth. The grandeur of our destiny, and the prominent position we are to occupy in the conversion of the world, are scarcely appreciated or understood. Wherever our history is read, or the epic of our life is sung, *there* America has power—the power of a moral influence that will touch with electric rapidity the very heart of nations, and galvanize into vitality the dead forms of an ignorant and antiquated worship.

Everts, before he went to his reward, published a paper entitled "The Moral Destiny of the United States," in which, he showed from safe calculations, that in one hundred and seventy years, the population of this land would be swelled to one thousand millions! The growth of our country since proves its probable truth. We double our population once in twenty-five years. Think of a people possessing the elements, physical, intellectual, and moral, to which we have referred, increasing for two centuries, and how amazing is the responsibility of our position! For what a career prepared and preparing! To what a destiny tending! Ah! I love my country. There is more in this land to love than in any other beneath the sun. I love my God, who gave it, and the memory of our fathers who bled for it.

"Lives there a man with soul so dead,  
Who ne'er within himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land?"

We believe our country is destined to survive the disasters that may yet await it; like a proud promontory, whose base is in the deep, whose summit reaches the clouds; the drifting storms

may strike upon its breast, the fretful ocean may dash upon its base ; but it will stand as a beacon to the multitudes afar off—the home of liberty, and an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. We turn an incredulous ear to the cry of political alarmists about the dissolution of the Union. We are still sheltered by the wing of a kind Providence, and under auspices divine, if we are true to our principles, we shall yet achieve a sublime destiny. Let pious patriotism take down her suspended and silent harp, and on this day of public congratulation, cheer the world with the melody of strains.\* Let God be praised from land to land, and from sea to sea. Let the song rise and swell, waxing louder and sweeter till it be lost in that great hymn chanted in the abodes of light.

Thus, my brethren, have I endeavored to set the past and present aspects of our country, in contrast before you. We have seen that progress has been made, in the physical, the political, the educational, and religious condition of our country ; that we have been borne as on eagles' wings ; that our land is full of interest and encouragement, to the nations struggling for freedom and light. But it may be asked ; is not this strain of congratulation ill-timed ? Are not the hopes of the world wrapped in gloom ? Has not the past year been one of reaction and discouragement ? True, France has disappointed the hopes of freemen. Italy has struggled in vain ; yet not in vain. Rome has fallen, and the Pope, like a vulture, awaits the last struggle of the victim, to gorge himself on the remains of the child of republicanism. Hungary, alas for her ; she has fallen a prey to the Northern Bear and the eagles of Hapsburgh. Germany awakes from the dream of unity to find herself in the perfidious hands of Frederick William and Joseph. The pall of death seems to have settled down again on Europe, and the voice of freedom seems hushed to silence. This, however, is a partial and limited view. It leaves out of sight the purpose of God and the power of that Spirit which is abroad among the nations of the earth. The giant Liberty is not dead, but only slumbers to recruit his energies for a more vigorous and successful effort.

Let evangelical light and truth be diffused : Let the Protestant principle work like leaven among the masses of the people. Let this be done and a foundation will be laid, on which, popular rights and free institutions may stand forever. Until *it is done*, the upheavings of society and the throes of humanity will be, like the tossing fires of a volcano, to fall back again into the crater of passion and crime, or to overflow with the burning lava only to devastate and destroy. While then, we review the past, let us be prepared to meet the exigences of the present, and anticipate a glorious future, all radiant with the light of prophecy, and glowing with the full and finished purposes of Him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and to whom, the kingdoms of this world are given in covenant as the reward of his sufferings, and the trophies of his victory."

\* Thanksgiving Day.

